

SHORT SUMMARY  
OF THE  
LIFE OF MAJOR-GENERAL  
SIR ISAAC BROCK

By  
H. TUPPER

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**Who was Isaac Brock?**

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SIR ISAAC BROCK, K.B.

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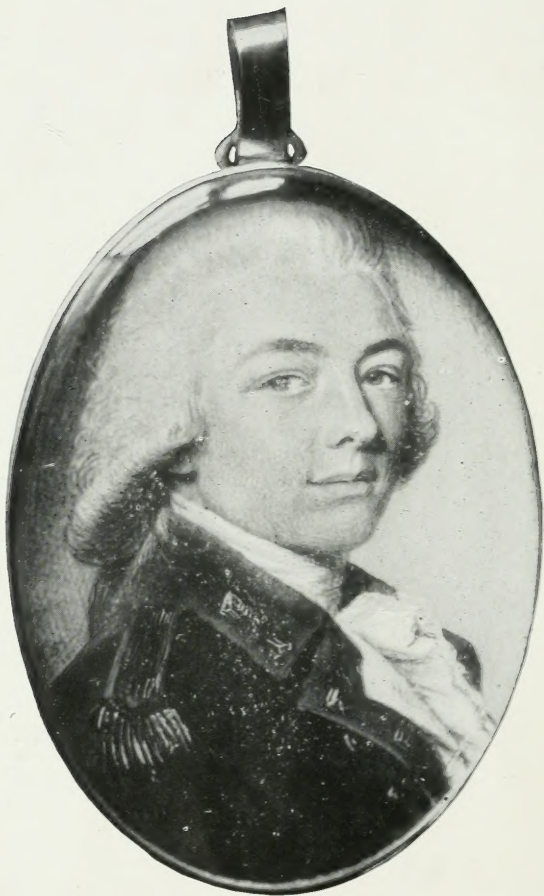
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*Isaac Brock, at the age of 15.  
Ensign in the 8th Regt.*

## Who was Isaac Brock?

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This Lecture is intended as an answer to that question which has been asked by some of the younger folk since the Town Church Memorial has been mooted.

But I want to preface my imperfect sketch of his life with the opening sentence in Walter Nursey's "Story of Isaac Brock" for the Canadian Heroes Series: "That Isaac Brock is entitled to rank as the foremost defender of the flag Western Canada has seen is a statement which no one familiar with history can deny."

Now to go back 150 years, to the year 1769, the year that saw the birth of Napoleon and Wellington. In that year Isaac Brock first saw the light in St. Peter Port, which then had a population of about 8000. We can obtain some idea of what the town looked like in those days when we realize that from Lord de Saumarez' house, where St. Paul's Chapel now stands, there were only eight houses bordering the road to the Castel Church; that St. James' Street and Candie Road were miserable lanes without footpaths. The Grange Road was equally narrow, but it had a footpath.

Isaac Brock was one of ten sons, come of a good old fighting stock, and his great ambition was to be a soldier. He delighted in all manly sports, long remembered by his school fellows as the best boxer and swimmer among them, swimming to Castle Cornet and back, a distance of nearly half a mile each way. In his own family he was chiefly remarkable for his extreme gentleness.

He had only passed his fifteenth birthday, when he was appointed, in March, 1785, ensign, by purchase, of the 8th King's Regiment, in which his elder brother

John was already a Captain. Having entered the Army at so early an age, he happily felt sensible of the deficiencies of his education, and for a long period he devoted his leisure mornings to study, locking the door of his room till one o'clock to prevent interruption.

In 1790 he obtained his lieutenancy, and a year later he raised an independent company and was given command of it with Captain's rank. Soon after he exchanged into the 49th, and by the time he was twenty-eight he became Senior Lieut.-Colonel. The Regiment, owing to laxity on the part of the late Commander, was in a badly demoralized condition. To restore the morals of the corps was his first duty. So thoroughly did he carry this out that the Duke of York declared that "out of one of the worst regiments in the service, Colonel Brock had made the 49th one of the best." This was a wonderful tribute from the Commander-in-Chief to a Colonel of a marching regiment, not yet thirty years old. Soon this re-organized 49th was to take part in the Great British Expedition to Holland, under the command of Sir Ralph Abercromby. It had been agreed by a treaty between Russia and Britain, that an army should be sent to Holland, to drive the French troops from the land, and to try to stop the growing power of the French who were slowly but surely bringing all Europe under their sway. The first engagement was at Egmont op Zee, and here the 49th formed part of the 4th Brigade under Sir John Moore. The British Expedition to Holland was a failure, but it was of much benefit to Brock. He learned lessons of the greatest value from his experiences under two such soldiers as Sir Ralph Abercromby and Sir John Moore.

Great Britain's foes were now threatening on all sides. Strong Russian and Danish fleets were in the Baltic. Britain determined to make a mighty effort to

destroy or capture these fleets and to humble the Danes. A powerful fleet of thirty-three vessels was fitted out. Sir Hyde Parker and Lord Nelson were in command and Colonel Brock was second-in-command of the land forces. But the Danes offered so fierce a resistance that the landing had to be given up, and the infantry remaining on the decks of the vessels were subjected to very severe gun fire to which they could make no reply. At the close of the battle Brock accompanied Captain Freemantle to the *Elephant*, Nelson's flagship, where he saw the hero write his celebrated letter to the Crown Prince of Denmark. It ran as follows :—

“ Lord Nelson has directions to spare Denmark when no longer resisting; but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, Lord Nelson will be obliged to set on fire all the floating batteries he has taken without having the power to save the brave Danes who have defended them.”

Brock may have taken a hint from this famous message. At any rate it closely resembles the message he sent later to General Hull, in Detroit.

In the spring of 1802 the 49th Regiment was ordered to make ready to go to Canada. They set sail from England in June, and after weeks of unusually stormy weather for the summer season arrived at Quebec. The vast river St. Lawrence, opening into the heart of the continent, the miles and miles of forest, growing thick to the shores, the strong natural fortress at Quebec, crowned by defences that had experienced four protracted sieges, must have impressed Brock with the vastness of the country to which this was but the gateway. For a short period he remained at the capital of Canada, but the 49th was destined for Upper Canada, now Ontario, and to that wilderness, as he thought it, it was necessary he should go.

Almost immediately on his arrival in Canada, Brock was faced with a problem most trying to any military leader. The monotonous life in the colony was distasteful to soldiers, especially to those who were accustomed to the city life and pleasures of the old land, and desertions were common. The men were frequently tempted to take this course by inducements held out to them by citizens of the United States, and, as it was easy at frontier posts for a deserter to slip across the border unobserved, it was needful to keep a close watch on the men. Brock learned that desertion was common in Canada, and at once took the matter in hand in order to prevent such a thing happening in the 49th. He tried, by treating his men with exceptional kindness, to make them content with their lot.

Shortly after arriving at York, now Toronto, Brock suspected that a soldier, named Carr, had made up his mind to desert. He had him brought before him and questioned him carefully. At length he appealed to him with the words, "Tell me the truth like a man—you know I have always treated you kindly!" Carr was so moved by his Commander's generous words that he broke down, and confessed that he and a number of others had decided to seek homes in the United States. He expected punishment, but instead of this, Brock told him to go and let his comrades know all that had passed between them. "Tell them," he said, "that notwithstanding what you have told me, I shall treat you all kindly"; and he added, "let them desert me if they please." His generous act for the time being removed the danger of desertion. He had placed his men on their honour, and they needed but little watching.

The men of the 49th were, however, still subject to great temptations, and, in the following summer, a corporal of the 41st Regiment induced six of them to flee



with him to the United States. When Brock learned of this, he at once ordered an open boat to be manned, and, although it was midnight, determined, without a moment's delay, to pursue the deserters across Lake Ontario. The distance across was about thirty miles, but the long journey by water, in a far from seaworthy boat, had no terrors for a man who had had his early training on the storm-swept coast of Guernsey. Fort George was reached early on the following morning after a hard and exhausting row. As soon as Brock arrived at the fort, he ordered Lieutenant Cheshire to take a party of men and search for the deserters along the United States shore of Lake Ontario. With scarcely any rest, Brock once more entered the boat and turned its head towards York, keeping a sharp look-out along the western end of the lake. The searching party from Fort George succeeded in capturing all the deserters, and they were taken prisoners to the fort. They were caught on the United States shore, and, had this been known to the American authorities, difficulties might have arisen. Brock's prompt action was a warning to his men, and never again were there desertions where Brock was personally in command.

Lieut.-General Hunter had at this time authority over the forces in both provinces. He happened to be at York when Brock went on his perilous journey, and, it is said, took Brock to task for risking his life in an open boat across Lake Ontario.

Shortly after this event a more serious affair occurred at Fort George. Mutiny and wholesale desertion were planned. It is difficult to excuse such things, but if ever they were to be excused, it was at Fort George. Lieutenant-Colonel Sheaffe was in command there. He had earned the hatred of his men in Jersey, while left in command of the 49th during Brock's absence. He seems

to have acted in an even harsher manner towards the soldiers in Canada. There were four black holes in Fort George, and these were never empty. Men were flogged for offences that another commander would have passed over with a rebuke; one hundred, two hundred, and even three hundred lashes were imposed for such crimes against discipline as being deficient of a frill, a razor, or a shirt, part of their regimental necessaries, or for quitting barrack without leave after tattoo. During the flogging the "cat" was sometimes steeped in brine to make the suffering of the victim more intense. It is little wonder that the men should have hated, with a murderous hatred, the tyrant sentencing them to punishment.

A sergeant, named Clarke, took a leading part in a conspiracy against officers. It was planned to seize them and murder all, except one who had recently joined. If the men succeeded in the plot they intended to flee to the United States. The conspiracy was discovered. A meeting of the officers was called and the matter fully discussed, and it was agreed that no public step should be taken until Colonel Brock was made acquainted with the particulars.

A report from Colonel Sheaffe was at once dispatched to York by a Government schooner then in the Niagara river; and on the receipt thereof Colonel Brock hurried off in the same schooner, taking with him his young and devoted sergeant-major. The vessel arrived near the mouth of the river a little before noon, and at the Colonel's request she was anchored below the town, under the bank of the lake, where he was landed alone, the sergeant-major by his orders remaining below deck out of view, until sent for. He then walked over the common to the east gate of the fort, the sentry at which, on seeing him approach, called out the guard, the usual

compliment to a commanding officer. The day was very hot, and it being the soldiers' dinner-hour, not an officer or man appeared out of doors. The Colonel crossed the square to the guard, which he found commanded by Sergeant Clarke. Now, it was part of the plan that the mutineers were to take to their arms on some night when Sergeant Clarke and Corporal O'Brien were on guard, and the Colonel by chance found them both on guard.

On approaching the guard, which had already presented arms to him, Colonel Brock said: "Sergeant, let your guard shoulder arms," and it was done, when the Colonel, who was a man of towering frame and commanding aspect, continued: "Come here, sergeant, lay down your pike;" pronounced in a tone which produced instant obedience. "Take off your sword and sash, and lay them down." This was also done. "Corporal O'Brien, bring a pair of handcuffs, and put them on this sergeant, and lock him up in one of the cells, and bring me the key."

This was soon done. "Come here, corporal, lay down your arms, take off your accoutrements, and lay them down also." It was done. "Come here, you grenadier," the right hand man of the guard, "bring a pair of handcuffs and put them on this corporal, and lock him up in another cell, and bring me the key," and it was also done. "Drummer, beat to arms," and it was done.

Up to this moment no one in the garrison, except the sentry and the guard, knew that the Colonel was in the fort. The first person seen issuing from the officers' barracks, the nearest building to the guard-house, was Lieutenant Williams, with his sword and belt in his hand, to whom the Colonel said: "Williams, go and instantly secure Rock, and if he hesitates to obey, even

for a moment, cut him down." Lieutenant Williams commanded the light company, to which Rock had recently been transferred after his reduction from sergeant in a company at Montreal, a few weeks before. Williams ran upstairs and called to Rock to come down with him, and Rock replied : " Yes Sir, when I take my arms." " No, you must come without them." " I must have my arms, Sir"—at the same time stretching out his hand towards his musket, in the arm-rack. " If you touch your musket, I will cut you down instantly ; go down before me ! " and at the same time Williams drew his sabre. Rock obeyed, and was, with ten other conspirators, put in irons, and the whole, with Fitzpatrick, were immediately embarked for York, in charge of a guard of the Royal Artillery—in number, twelve conspirators, with a corporal and seven deserters, lately overtaken in the States and brought back—in all twenty.

Lieut.-General Hunter, then at Quebec, ordered that the delinquents should be tried in that garrison ; and thither they were sent in September, Lieut.-Colonel Sheaffe being the prosecutor. In January following, the proceedings of the court-martial were transmitted to the General at York, and he issued an order for carrying the sentence into execution, by which four of the conspirators (Clarke, O'Brien, Rock, and Fitzpatrick) and three deserters (one each of the 6th, 41st, and 49th Regiments) were condemned to suffer death. They were shot on the second of March, 1804, at Quebec, in the presence of the entire garrison, and a most solemn and affecting sight it was.

When news reached York that the sentence had been carried out, Brock assembled the soldiers, and with a voice full of emotion addressed them. " Since I have had the honour to wear the British uniform," he said, " I have never felt grief like this. It pains me to the

heart to think that any members of my regiment should have engaged in a conspiracy which has led to their being shot like so many dogs."

Brock became a Brigadier in 1808, a Major-General in June, 1811, and three months later he received a very honourable and arduous commission which gave him a civil as well as a military status, by being made "President and Administrator of the Government of Upper Canada." This appointment was one of the most profitable nominations ever made in the *London Gazette*, since it put the right man in the right place, just nine months before the crisis, which was to arise from the outbreak of war in the United States in June, 1812.

The Americans were sure of victory. Dr. Eustis, Secretary of War, thought that they could capture Canada without soldiers; they had only to send officers into the provinces, and the people, discontented with their own government, would rally round the Stars and Stripes. Henry Clay said: "It is absurd to suppose that we will not succeed in our enterprise. We have the Canadas as much under our control as Great Britain has the ocean, and the way to conquer her on the ocean is to drive her from the land. I am not for stopping at Quebec, or anywhere else, but I would take the whole continent from them and ask them no favours."

Ex-President Jefferson, whose enmity against the British and continual scheming were largely responsible for the war, looked upon the campaign merely as a matter of marching through the country from Detroit to Halifax. One General Widgery, a member of Congress, said: "I will engage to take Canada by contract. I will raise a company and take it in six weeks." It was a case of, "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." The United States was entering on the war with an empty treasury, with untrained officers and

inexperienced soldiers, and with division in the nation. In the New England States, sermons were preached against the wicked declaration of war, and, in detestation of it, flags were flown at half-mast in the city of Boston.

However, the confidence of the Americans was not to be wondered at, for even the Governor-General of Canada expressed the belief that Quebec was the only spot that could be held against the enemy. Brock, too, with all his courage, had misgivings. "I talk loud, and look big," he wrote; but in his letters are frequent remarks which show that he quite expected to have to retreat before the invading host.

Canada was in a perilous condition, and it was due solely to Brock's military skill and energy that it was saved from the invader. There were fewer than 1,500 regular troops in Upper Canada, and these were scattered at the posts between Fort St. Joseph, in Lake Huron, and Kingston. They were guarding a frontier of about 1,300 miles.

Brock had a far from loyal House of Assembly at his back, and immediately prior to the war, when he clearly foresaw that it could not be avoided, he found it impossible to have measures passed which he thought necessary for the safety of the Province. It was clear to him that a number of the members of the Assembly were in sympathy with the United States. He called an extra session on July 27th to pass bills which he deemed of the greatest importance in this time of war, but the members, instead of helping him in this crisis, wasted their time in discussing unimportant measures. He dismissed the Assembly, and determined, if the occasion should arise for the exercise of martial law, to put it in force. His speech at the opening of this extra session was one that could not but give hope to those who heard it.



It was the ringing speech of a man who would not allow himself to be conquered without a struggle. He closed it with the words :

“ We are engaged in an awful and eventful contest. By unanimity and despatch in our councils, and by vigour in our operations, we may teach the enemy this lesson : that a country defended by free men, enthusiastically devoted to the cause of their king and constitution, can never be conquered.”

General Hull invaded Canada at Sandwich, opposite Detroit, on July 12th, 1812. He met with no opposition. There was no time to be lost. It was necessary to strike a decisive blow at once. Brock decided to beard the lion in his den, and to meet Hull and his strong army at or near Detroit.

On August 8th, Brock reached Long Point, where open boats were ready to convey his force on its journey.

He here embarked with forty men of the 41st Regiment and 260 Militia. They had a stormy and dangerous passage up the lake. The boat Brock was in ran on a rock, and oars and poles were unable to move it. Brock, quick to act, leaped into the lake, and the crew followed his example. The boat at once floated, and the men, drenched and shivering, but light-hearted, boarded it, with renewed admiration for their commander. It was not till after five days of rough experience with wind and rain, bravely endured, that the little force, on which so much depended, reached Amherstburg.

Hull had learned of Brock's approach and became alarmed. On the day on which the force reached Amherstburg, he withdrew the last of his troops from Canadian soil, and Sandwich was at once occupied by a British force. Captain Dixon proceeded to erect batteries

there, and in two days' time had five guns in position, threatening Fort Detroit.

Brock sent his aides-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel John Macdonell, the attorney-general of Upper Canada, and Captain Glegg, to Detroit, under a flag of truce, demanding an immediate surrender. The wording of his message to Hull is interesting. It was as follows :—  
 "The force at my disposal authorizes me to require of you the surrender of Fort Detroit. It is far from my inclination to join in a war of extermination, but you must be aware that the numerous body of Indians, who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences."

How much this message is like the one sent by Nelson to the Crown Prince of Denmark, at Copenhagen !

Brock knew that Hull was in mortal terror of the savages, and that he believed that a countless horde was advancing from the west to annihilate his force. The United States commander would, indeed, have gladly surrendered, but he had to make some show of resistance, and so he replied that he was ready to meet any force that might be at Brock's disposal. The Sandwich batteries then opened fire, and the fort replied, but, as little damage was done on either side, Brock, at night-fall, gave orders for firing to cease. He then decided to lead his army across the river. He consulted his officers, only to find practically all of them opposed to his seemingly mad undertaking. He had, however, the enthusiastic support of Colonel Nichol, his quartermaster general. There was another individual who looked with favour on his plan, Tecumseh, the bravest and most intelligent Indian that ever led forces into battle. Brock took him into his confidence. He asked the Indian Chief if he could give him definite information about the country around Detroit. Tecumseh silently spread a

piece of birch bark on the ground, and with his scalping knife traced on it an excellent military map, showing the streams to be crossed, the groves where shelter might be had, and the approaches to the fort.

Of Tecumseh, Brock afterwards wrote: "A more sagacious or a more gallant warrior does not, I believe, exist." He was the admiration of everyone who conversed with him. Tecumseh seems to have had equal admiration for Brock. On their first meeting, after listening to a brief speech from the British General, Tecumseh turned to his assembled warriors, and said: "This is a MAN!" the highest and most eloquent compliment that Brock was ever paid.

Brock, after examining the map drawn by Tecumseh, despite the instructions of Prevost, the warnings of the War Office, and the dissent of his officers, decided to lead his troops across the river on the morning of August 16th.

This was in the spirit in which he had once exclaimed, in reply to his sergeant-major's plea that some command had been *impossible* to execute—"Nothing should be impossible to a soldier; the word impossible should not be found in a soldier's dictionary."

During the night, Brock, with wise foresight, had sent across 600 Indians, under Colonel Elliott and Tecumseh, to attack the enemy in front and rear, if any attempt should be made to oppose the crossing.

By the time the August sun had risen above the horizon, all was in readiness, and in quick succession the vessels left the Canadian shore. In the craft were a few Indians, 30 men of the Royal Artillery, 250 of the 41st Regiment, 50 of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and 400 Canadian Militia. They were about to give battle to a force strong in heavy guns, and yet all the artillery they carried with them were three 6-pounders

and two 3-pounders, under the command of Lieutenant Troughton.

Brock was in the foremost boat, standing erect. He took this position for two reasons. One was to give confidence to the untried soldiers he had with him, and the other, to win the esteem of the Indians,—a bold warrior they would follow anywhere. The landing was made at Springwells, about four miles below Detroit, and, as the boats were beached, the soldiers quickly leaped ashore, the regiments formed up, and all waited the will of their leader.

Scarcely had Brock reached the United States shore when he learned that a body of picked troops of between 500 and 600 men (the actual number was about 350) was absent from Detroit, attempting to bring in much needed supplies from the river Raisin. Hull had sent orders to these troops to return immediately to the fort. They were at this critical moment only a few miles in the rear. It was necessary to force the fall of Detroit before they could come up, otherwise Brock might have to beat a retreat across the river, and this could have been done only with great loss. Without a moment's hesitation, he drew up his little army, and boldly led it against the fortification. Brock was now attempting a perilous task; a seemingly impossible task with his 600 Indians and his 700 and odd white troops. Fort Detroit was a stronghold of great strength. According to a contemporary account, it was built in the form of a parallelogram with strong bastions at each corner; a moat or ditch eight feet deep and twelve feet wide surrounded it. It had palisades of hardwood stakes ten feet high, sharpened at the top, and firmly set in the escarpment at the base of the rampart, with an incline of forty degrees. The rampart rose perpendicularly twenty-two feet, and was pierced with embrasures for cannon. It had a portcullis

well ironed on the east front, protected by a projecting framework of huge logs standing over the moat, pierced for small arms. It had a drawbridge, and sallyports near the southern and northern bastions.

Brock placed himself near the head of his little army, and so was a conspicuous mark for the foe should they open fire. Colonel Nichol, who had a deep affection for him, begged him not to expose himself unnecessarily. "If we lose you," he said, "we lose all. Let me pray you to allow the troops to pass on, led by their own officers." But Brock had with him many raw recruits who were now about to have their first experience of actual battle. They needed an inspiring example, and to Nichol's kindly words, he replied: "Master Nichol, I duly appreciate the advice you give me, but I feel that in addition to their sense of loyalty and duty, many here follow me from personal regard, and I will never ask them to go where I do not lead them."

This speech recalls an anecdote concerning Tecumseh. He was a most enthusiastic admirer of Brock's, and despised General Proctor, under whose leadership, or rather lack of leadership, he afterwards lost his life at Moraviantown. In giving his opinion of the two generals, he said, in broken English, "General Brock say, 'Tecumseh, *come* fight Yankee.' General Proctor say, 'Tecumseh, *go* fight Yankee.'"

Just as Brock had placed his men under cover, and had ascended the brow of a rising ground to reconnoitre the fort, he saw, to his intense surprise and glee, a white flag advancing from the side of the enemy. Hull was sending out word that he was prepared to surrender, in response to yesterday's summons! In consequence the British took possession of the fort within an hour, and found that a force, considerably larger than their own, had surrendered to them.

The prize was a rich one. The whole of the territory of Michigan was surrendered. Besides the prisoners of war, there fell into the hands of the British 39 cannon, 2,500 muskets, innumerable musket cartridges, 60 barrels of gunpowder, 180 tons of lead, and 200 tons of cannon ball, besides other military stores. The troops likewise found abundant food in Detroit. The garrison could easily have held out for several weeks on the supplies they had on hand at the time when the fortress was surrendered. Behind the fort, on a common, were found hundreds of cattle and about 1,000 sheep and many horses.

These had for the most part been stolen from Canadian farms in the thieving raids that Hull's men had been making into Canada for the past month. In addition to these supplies there was at Detroit a brig called the "Adams." This brig had only recently been finished, and was in fine condition. Hull had hoped that with this vessel he would easily have gained control of Lake Erie. The "Adams" was renamed the "Detroit," in honour of the new-won British fort.

Major-General Brock's services throughout this short campaign, closed by an achievement which his energy and decision crowned with such unqualified success, were highly appreciated by the government at home, and immediately rewarded with the Order of the Bath, which was then confined to one degree of knighthood only. He was gazetted to this mark of his country's approbation, so gratifying to the feelings of a soldier, on the 19th of October, but he lived not long enough to learn that he had obtained so honorable a distinction, the knowledge of which would have cheered him in his last moments. Singularly enough, his dispatches, accompanied by the colours of the U.S. 4th Regiment, reached London early on the morning of the 6th of



October, the anniversary of his birthday. His brother William, who was residing in the vicinity, was asked by his wife why the Park and Tower guns were saluting. "For Isaac, of course," he replied; "do you not know that this is his birthday?" And when he came to town he learnt, with emotions which may be easily conceived, that what he had just said in jest was true in reality.

Major-General Brock to Sir George Prevost.

Head Quarters, Detroit,  
August 16th, 1812.

"I hasten to apprise your Excellency of the capture of this very important post; 2,500 troops have this day surrendered prisoners of war, and about 25 pieces of ordnance have been taken without the sacrifice of a drop of British blood. I had not more than 700 troops, including militia, and about 600 Indians, to accomplish this service. When I detail my good fortune, your Excellency will be astonished. I have been admirably supported by Colonel Proctor, the whole of my staff, and I may justly say, every individual under my command."

Major-General Brock to his brothers.

Head Quarters, Detroit,  
August 16th, 1812.

My dear Brothers and Friends,

"Rejoice at my good fortune, and join me in prayers to Heaven. I send you a copy of my hasty note to Sir George."

(Here follows his short dispatch of that day).

Let me hear that you are all *united* and happy.

After arranging for the future government of Detroit, and leaving Colonel Proctor in charge of affairs in Michigan, Brock boarded the schooner "Chippewa," and set sail for Fort Erie, intending before the snow fell to

finish the work he had begun so well and sweep the enemies' armies from the entire frontier. While sailing down the lake he was met with the keenest disappointment of his career. Scarcely was he out of sight of Amherstburg, when he was hailed by the schooner "Lady Prevost," which was speeding up the lake. This vessel bore the tidings that Sir George Prevost had concluded an armistice with General Dearborn, Commander-in-Chief of the United States army, and that all acts of warfare must cease until it was known whether or not President Madison would agree to this armistice.

Nothing could have been more unfortunate. Brock had laid his plans of future warfare well, and would have carried them out with the same rapidity with which he swooped down on Detroit. He had already sent Colonel Proctor with a strong force and some Indians against Fort Wayne in the Miami country. This fort was a base of supplies, and its capture would retard American operations in the direction of Detroit. He had another reason for dispatching this force to Fort Wayne. The garrison at that point was a small one. They were for the time being cut off from their main force, and were threatened by the Indian hordes that were rejoicing over the defeat of their enemies.

There was grave danger that the savages would ruthlessly massacre this garrison. Brock, in a letter to Prevost, stated that one of the chief reasons for sending this force to Fort Wayne, was to save the lives of the garrison. Now, on account of the armistice, he had to send orders for the recall of Proctor's force.

On September 4th, Brock received, at Kingston, the news that the truce was at an end, and two days later he was back on the Niagara frontier, preparing to receive the inevitable attack. He had at his disposition four companies of the 41st and six of the 49th, which Prevost

had recently sent him from the Lower Province, together with the militia of the counties of York, Lincoln and Norfolk, the whole amounting to a little over 2000 bayonets. In addition, between 200 and 300 Indians had joined him. With this force he had to guard the whole length of the Niagara river, some thirty-six miles from lake to lake, of which only the central portion, along the precipices above and below the Great Falls, could be considered impracticable to the enemy. At each end of the broad river was a small British post. Fort George, on Lake Ontario, Fort Erie, on the lake of the same name. All save the small space covered by their guns had to be watched by Brock's little army.

The Americans were commanded by Van Rensselaer, who had fixed upon the heights above the Canadian village of Queenston, seven miles from the northern end of the river, as his objective. On the night of the 12th—13th October, Van Rensselaer threw his advanced guard across the rapid river, just above Queenston, at a point where the passage was completely commanded by a six-gun battery on his own side. Some of his boats were carried too far down stream, but ten, bearing some 225 men, mostly of the 13th United States regulars, struck the bank at the appointed spot, put their men ashore, and returned for a second load. The passage had not escaped the notice of the British picquets along the bank, and before dawn opposition was beginning. At Queenston there lay the two flank companies of the 49th Regiment, and two more of the York Militia.

About seven o'clock Brock himself came upon the scene absolutely alone; he had outridden his solitary aide-de-camp, and took up his position on the edge of Queenston Heights, overlooking the scene of the skirmish. The heights were believed to be impassable, and he sent off the Infantry to repel the enemy who had

landed at a small one-gun battery on the edge of the heights, and remained with only the twelve gunners at the battery. Suddenly musket balls began to fall around him, and he was forced to retire after spiking the gun, by a rush of some 150 Americans who had climbed the cliffs and reached the crest. This party seized the battery, and took up a position about it. Brock succeeded in escaping to the lower level. It was absolutely necessary to drive the enemy off the heights, and Brock called up from the skirmish below the nearest men that could be caught, some 90 regulars and militia mixed, and advanced to recover the point of vantage. The skirmish grew hot; the British and Canadians charged, were repelled, and charged again. At this moment it was reported to Brock that his first reinforcement had come up—two weak companies, 90 men of the York Militia, from Brown's point. He was turning to shout to the messenger, "Push on the York Volunteers," when he was struck by a ball in the right breast, which passed completely through his body. He rolled off his horse, had just breath enough left to bid the officer nearest him to keep his fall concealed, and was dead within the minute. His corpse was carried downhill to Queenston, and hidden under a pile of blankets, in obedience to his orders.

But Brock's glorious fight had not failed in its object. Brigadier Sheaffe arrived from Fort George with four companies of the 41st, and 200 Indian warriors. From the other flank at Chippewa about 100 more regulars had come up. The whole met the wrecks of the containing force near the village of St. David's, below the northern brow of Queenston Heights. They mustered only 800 in all, including the Indians; but the sole chance lay in striking before the whole American army was over the water. Brock's intentions were known,

and his spirit still dominated in the strife, though his body lay hidden obscurely two miles away. Sheaffe though he had many defects, was a good fighter; an old "United Empire Loyalist," who had served King George from the days of Bunker's Hill. He saw the chance of avenging many an ancient grudge on the old enemy. He deployed his little force, advanced obliquely up the heights at a great distance from the enemy's front, and sent out his Indians to work through some wooded ground on the left against the American flank, while he himself, the regulars on the right, the militia on the left, advanced in one two-deep line against their front.

The attack was completely successful; the Americans were tired out by the earlier fighting, and disheartened by the non-arrival of their re-inforcements. Many of the militia, it is said, were skulking at the foot of the slope, or on the river bank, instead of holding their places on the heights. One push sent the whole line flying; reeling back from the battery which they held, the whole were brought up by the precipice at their back. A few scrambled away by the path, but the majority threw down their arms. Pressing on, as best they could, in such rugged ground, Sheaffe's men took more prisoners in the flat below, and saw the boats shove off to the opposite shore with a flying remnant of their adversaries.

And so, says Professor Oman, like Douglas at Otterbourne, "The dead man won the field."

Sir Isaac Brock, after lying in state at the Government House, where his body was bedewed with the tears of many affectionate friends, was interred on the 16th October, with his provincial aide-de-camp, at Fort George. The sentiments of the British Government on the melancholy occasion were expressed in a dispatch

from Earl Bathurst, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Sir George Prevost, dated December 8, 1812: "His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, is fully aware of the severe loss which His Majesty's service has experienced in the death of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock. This would have been sufficient to have clouded a victory of much greater importance. His Majesty has lost in him not only an able and meritorious officer, but one who, in the exercise of his functions of provisional Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, displayed qualities admirably adapted to awe the disloyal, to reconcile the wavering, and to animate the great mass of the inhabitants against successive attempts of the enemy to invade the province, in the last of which he unhappily fell, too prodigal of that life of which his eminent services had taught us to understand the value."

Such was the esteem in which Sir Isaac Brock was held by the enemies of his country, for he had or could have no personal enemies, that Major-General Van Rensselaer, in a letter of condolence, informed Major-General Sheaffe that immediately after the funeral solemnities were over on the British side, a compliment of minute guns would be paid to the hero's memory on theirs!! Accordingly, the cannon at Fort Niagara were fired, "as a mark of respect due to a brave enemy."

There are Americans in Guernsey now. I should like them to know how this was always gratefully remembered by the Brock family.

"Thus ended in their total discomfiture, 'says Christie in his Historical Memoirs,' the second attempt of the Americans to invade Upper Canada. The loss of the British is said to have been about 20 killed, including Indians, and between 50 and 60 wounded. The fall of General Brock, the idol of the army and the people of Upper Canada, was an irreparable loss, and cast a shade



over the glory of this dear-bought victory. He was a native of Guernsey, of an ancient and reputable family, distinguished in the profession of arms. He had served for many years in Canada, and in some of the principal campaigns in Europe. He commanded a detachment of his favourite 49th regiment, on the expedition to Copenhagen with Lord Nelson, where he distinguished himself. He was one of those extraordinary men who seem born to influence mankind, and mark the age in which they live. Conscious of the ascendancy of his genius over those who surrounded him, he blended the mildest of manners with the severity and discipline of a camp; and though his deportment was somewhat grave and imposing, the noble frankness of his character imparted at once confidence and respect to those who had occasion to approach his person. As a soldier he was brave to a fault, and not less judicious than decisive in his measures. The energy of his character was strongly expressed in his countenance, and in the robust and manly symmetry of his frame. As a civil governor, he was firm, prudent, and equitable. In fine, whether we view him as a man, a statesman, or a soldier, he equally deserved the esteem and respect of his contemporaries and of posterity. The Indians who flocked to his standard were attached to him with almost enthusiastic affection, and the enemy even expressed an involuntary regret at his untimely fall. His prodigality of life bereft the country of his services at the early age of forty-two years. The remains of this gallant officer were, during the funeral service, honoured with a discharge of minute guns, from the American as well as the British, batteries; and with those of his faithful aide-de-camp, Lieut-Colonel Mc'Donell, were interred in the same grave at Fort George, on the 16th October, amidst the tears of an affectionate soldiery and a grateful

people, who will cherish his memory with veneration, and hand to their posterity the imperishable name of BROCK."

In memory of Brock two copper halfpenny tokens were struck, and some were in circulation in British North America a few years ago. One of the coins bears on the obverse a sepulchral urn standing on a pedestal, on which are inscribed, "Fell October 13th, 1812." Two winged genii hover over the urn, and crown it with a wreath of laurel. The whole is surmounted with the legend, "Sir Isaac Brock, the hero of Upper Canada." The reverse bears the date 1816, with the legend, "Success to commerce, and peace to the world." The other coin bears on the one side a three-masted ship in full sail, with the legend, "Success to the Commerce of Upper and Lower Canada"; and on the other side, "Sir Isaac Brock, the Hero of Upper Canada, who fell at the glorious Battle of Queenston Heights, on the 13th October, 1812."

In consequence of an address from the Commons of Upper Canada to the Prince Regent, a munificent grant of 12,000 acres of land in that province was bestowed on the four surviving brothers of Sir Isaac Brock, who, in addition, were allowed a pension of £200 a year for life, by a vote of the Imperial Parliament. To the "Hero of Upper Canada" as he is still affectionately termed in that country, the provincial legislature erected a lofty column on Queenston Heights, to which his remains and those of his gallant aide-de-camp, were removed from Fort George in solemn procession, on the 13th of October, 1824. On Good Friday, April 17th, 1840, this monument was shattered by an explosion of gunpowder, placed within the basement by a rebel of 1837 named Lett. In 1853 the corner stone of a new monument, the cost of which was borne by the people of Canada,

was erected on the same spot, and on October 13th, forty-one years after the British victory at Queenston, and the anniversary of Brock's splendid death, the remains of the two heroes were re-interred and deposited in two massive stone sarcophagi in the vault of the new monument. On the two oval silver plates on Brock's coffin was inscribed the following epitaph :—

Here lie the earthly remains of a brave and virtuous hero, Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, Commander of the British Forces, and President Administering the Government of Upper Canada, who fell when gloriously engaging the enemies of his country, at the head of the Flank Companies of the 49th Regiment, in the town of Queenston, on the morning of the 13th October, 1812, aged 42 years.

J. B. GLEGG, A.D.C.















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